

Prepositioning



The U.S. Navy's
MILITARY • SEALIFT • COMMAND

The Prepositioning Program is composed of:

Maritime Prepositioning Ships

Army Prepositioned Stocks-3 Ships

Navy, Defense Logistics Agency and Air Force Ships

Cover: A U.S. Marine Corps vehicle is guided down the ramp of MSC Maritime Prepositioning Ship MV Cpl. Louis J. Hauge. The ship was among the first to off-load combat vehicles, equipment and ammunition during the buildup of U.S. forces in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Prepositioning

Military Sealift Command's Prepositioning Program is an essential element in the U.S. military's readiness strategy. Afloat prepositioning strategically places military equipment and supplies aboard ships located in key ocean areas to ensure rapid availability during a major theater war, a humanitarian operation or other contingency. MSC's prepositioning ships support the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Defense Logistics Agency.

Prepositioning ships provide quick and efficient movement of military gear between operating areas without reliance on other nations' transportation networks. These ships give U.S. war fighters, who are flown into a theater of operations, the assurance that they will have what they need to quickly respond in a crisis – anywhere, anytime.



The distinctive stack stripes on prepositioning ship USNS Lance Cpl. Roy M. Wheat instantly identify it as part of MSC's fleet.



The ramp of an MSC Maritime Prepositioning Ship is used to off-load U.S. Marine Corps rolling stock onto a nine-module roll-on/roll-off discharge facility, which serves as an afloat staging area.

Most of MSC's prepositioning ships are able to discharge cargo pierside or while anchored offshore by using shallow-draft barges, called lighterage, that are carried aboard. This allows cargo to be ferried to shore in areas where ports are non-existent or in poor condition and gives the nation's military forces the ability to operate in both developed and undeveloped areas of the world.

Prepositioning ships include a combination of U.S. government-owned ships, chartered U.S.-flagged ships and ships activated from the Maritime Administration's Ready Reserve Force. All prepositioning ships are crewed by U.S. civilian mariners who work for ship operating companies under contract to the federal government.

While most active ships in MSC's Prepositioning Program strategically place combat gear at sea, there are other ships, including:

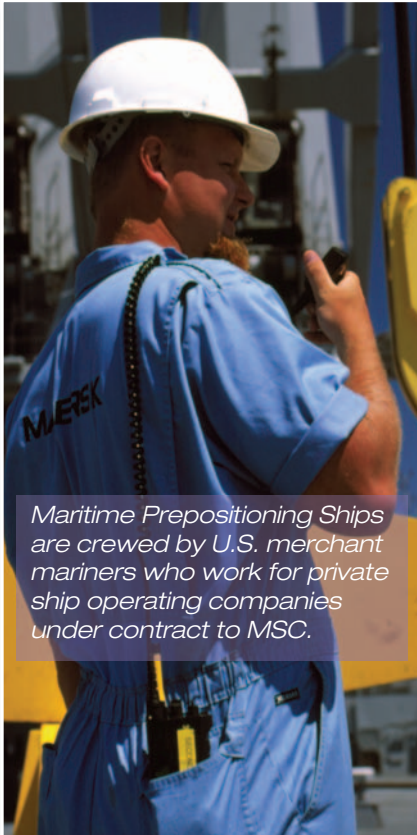
- A high-speed vessel that transports Marines, their combat vehicles and their associated gear in and around the Far East;
- A chartered offshore petroleum distribution system ship that can deliver fuel from up to eight miles offshore; and
- Two aviation logistics support ships that are activated as needed from reduced operating status to provide at-sea maintenance for Marine Corps fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft.

Prepositioning Ships For All U.S. Forces

- Maritime Prepositioning Ships support the U.S. Marine Corps;
- Army Prepositioned Stocks-3 ships support the U.S. Army; and
- Navy, Defense Logistics Agency and Air Force ships support not only those three agencies contained in the name, but also the U.S. Marine Corps and U.S. Army.



MSC Maritime Prepositioning Ship USNS 1st Lt. Balamero Lopez is part of Maritime Prepositioning Squadron Two, which operates out of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.



Maritime Prepositioning Ships are crewed by U.S. merchant mariners who work for private ship operating companies under contract to MSC.

Maritime Prepositioning Ships

Sixteen prepositioning ships, called Maritime Prepositioning Ships, are specially configured to strategically position supplies for the U.S. Marine Corps at sea. The ships are laden with a variety of Marine Corps equipment and supplies, including tanks, ammunition, food, hospital equipment, petroleum products and spare parts – ready for rapid delivery ashore when needed.

Three ship squadrons each contain four to five MPS, as well as other prepositioning ships that are dedicated to other military services. Each MPS squadron carries sufficient equipment and supplies to sustain more than 15,650 Marine Expeditionary Force personnel for up to 30 days.

Beginning in 2000, three Maritime Prepositioning Force (Enhanced) ships were added into the existing MPS squadrons, one ship per squadron, to provide critical new capabilities for the Marine Corps. Each MPF(E) ship carries a Navy fleet hospital, an expeditionary airfield and engineering equipment.



MSC Maritime Prepositioning Ship MV Pvt. Franklin J. Phillips operates as part of MPS Squadron Two, which is continuously underway and forward-deployed in the Indian Ocean.

Army Prepositioned Stocks-3 Ships

MSC's Army Prepositioned Stocks-3 ships strategically place U.S. Army combat equipment at sea to supply and sustain deployed U.S. troops during national crises. Most of the APS-3 ships are mammoth, government-owned cargo ships, called large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ships, or LMSRs. Each ship has a cargo-carrying capacity of more than 300,000 square feet.



MV Staff Sgt. Edward A. Carter Jr., is an MSC-chartered container ship dedicated to prepositioning Army supplies at sea.

LMSRs are ideal for rapid loading and off-loading of Army wheeled and tracked vehicles, as well as other outsized Army equipment. A series of internal and external ramps makes this possible, and huge shipboard cranes allow cargo to be lifted even in the most primitive or war-torn ports.

In 2007, some LMSRs were put in reduced operating status near potential

U.S. load ports to be on standby for transportation missions and reactivation.

In addition to LMSRs, APS-3 ships include two container ships that store ammunition at sea for the Army.



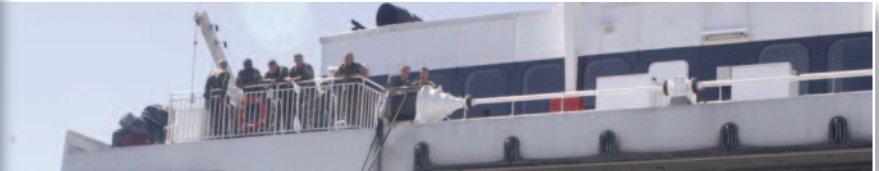
MSC's USNS Soderman, a large, medium-speed, roll-on/roll-off ship used for prepositioning U.S. Army combat equipment at sea, has a slewing stern ramp for rapid loading and off-loading of wheeled and tracked vehicles.

Navy, Defense Logistics Agency And Air Force Ships

The most diverse subset of MSC's prepositioning ships is called Navy, Defense Logistics Agency and Air Force ships, or NDAF. These ships operate around the world in support of the Department of Defense agencies contained in their name, as well as the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Army.

MSC-chartered prepositioning ship MV Capt. Steven L. Bennett has climate-controlled cocoons on its deck to protect the U.S. Air Force munitions carried aboard.





MSC-chartered high-speed vessel Westpac Express (left) is a fast, cost-effective means of transporting up to 970 Marines, plus vehicles and equipment, between ports in the Far East.

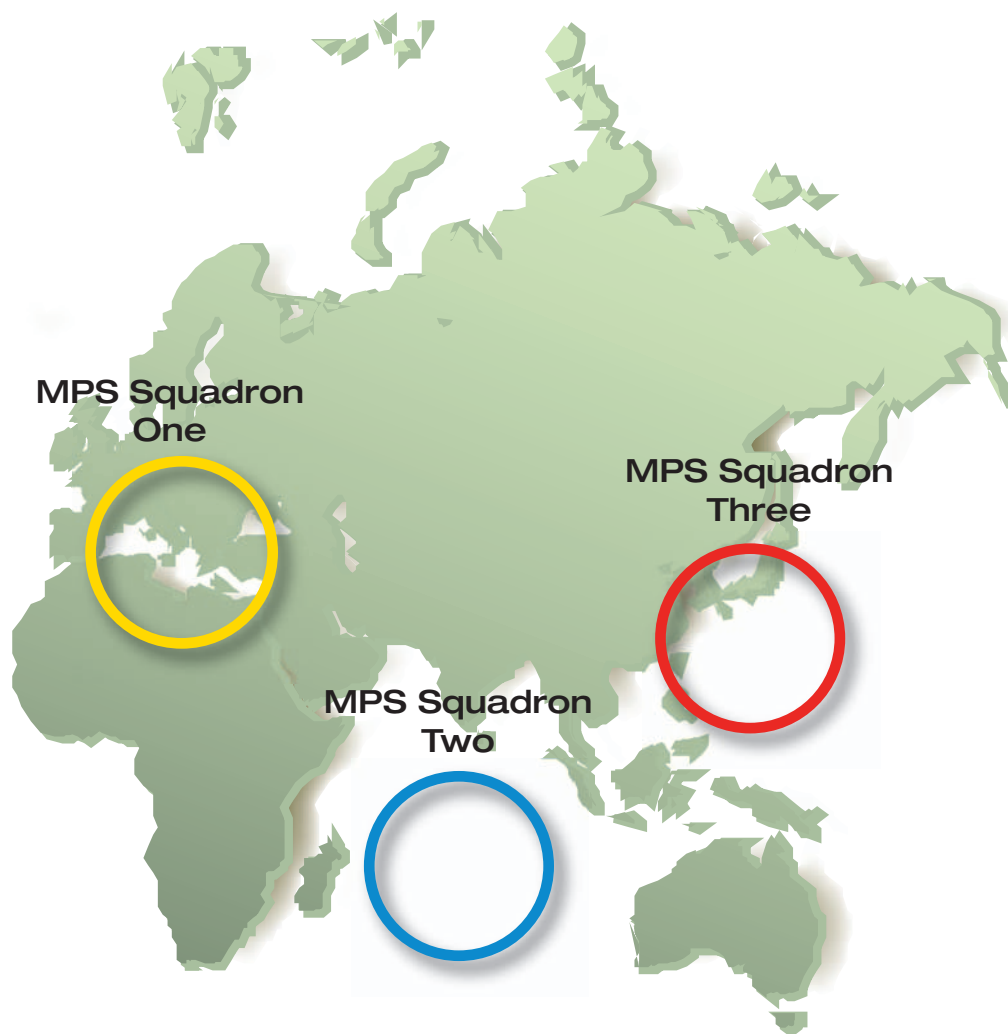
NDAF ships provide support for:

- The Navy; An activated Ready Reserve Force break-bulk ship prepositions non-containerized ammunition.
- The Air Force; Three long-term chartered container ships preposition munitions.
- The Defense Logistics Agency; A chartered offshore petroleum distribution system ship, capable of transferring fuel from ship to shore, keeps deployed U.S. warfighters supplied with fuel.
- The Marine Corps; Two aviation logistics support ships can be activated from the Ready Reserve Force to maintain and repair forward-deployed, rotary-wing aircraft at sea. A high-speed vessel supports the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force mostly for transporting cargo and military personnel between Okinawa, Japan, and other ports in the Far East. A chartered offshore petroleum distribution system ship delivers fuel from offshore to support Marines ashore.
- The Army; the same OPDS ship that supports Marines ashore also supports Army ground forces.



MSC-chartered MV VADM K.R. Wheeler is an offshore petroleum distribution system ship. It is uniquely designed to pump fuel ashore from up to eight miles, which will support U.S.-deployed war fighters.





Strategic Locations

Most MSC prepositioning ships are strategically located in three geographic areas and assigned to one of three Maritime Prepositioning Ship squadrons:

- MPS Squadron One is located in the Eastern Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea;
- MPS Squadron Two is located at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean; and
- MPS Squadron Three is located in the Western Pacific Ocean.

MSC's two aviation logistics support ships and some of the LMSRs are kept in reduced operating status and berthed on U.S. coasts.

Afloat Prepositioning: Rapid Response For U.S. War Fighters

For nearly three decades, MSC's prepositioning ships have been key to the combat readiness of the nation's armed forces.

The high-volume, cargo-carrying capacities of MSC's prepositioning ships have enabled huge deliveries

of U.S. combat gear, including out-sized vehicles, to overseas areas in crisis. These urgently needed deliveries could not have occurred as quickly, efficiently or cost effectively by any other means.

Prepositioning ships have been powerful first-responders, playing a series of decisive roles in support to the nation's combat forces. These ships delivered the first sizable amounts of armored equipment to deployed U.S. forces during both the Persian Gulf War in the early 1990s and Operation Restore Hope in Somalia from 1992 to 1993. Later, the ships demonstrated their value again as they provided extensive support for Operation Enduring Freedom beginning in 2001 and Operation Iraqi Freedom beginning in 2003.

Today, afloat prepositioning continues to give deployed U.S. war fighters an edge, ensuring fast delivery ashore of the earliest-arriving equipment and supplies.

As the global war on terrorism continues, MSC's prepositioning ships are an essential ingredient in the nation's defense. U.S. forces can remain confident that in times of national crisis, MSC prepositioning ships deliver.



MSC Maritime Prepositioning Ship USNS Lance Cpl. Roy M. Wheat is moved pierside by harbor tugs at the port of Ash Shuaybah in Kuwait.



A light amphibious recovery craft, or LARC, travels up the stern ramp of an underway MSC Maritime Prepositioning Ship. The LARC, working in conjunction with prepositioning ships, transported water from island to island in the Maldives following the devastation caused by a tsunami. MSC prepositioning ships are fast responders, capable of delivering equipment and supplies to war-torn or disaster-stricken areas.

Back cover: A visit, board, search and seizure team of U.S. Navy sailors maneuvers a rigid-hull inflatable boat off the coast of Poland as they prepare to board Maritime Prepositioning Ship USNS 2nd Lt. John P. Bobo during a military exercise.

MSC delivers



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